SECOND EDITION.

MORE LAST WORDS

OF

DR. JOHNSON, &c.

(PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.)

[Entered at Stationer's-Hall.]

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OF

Dr. JOHNSON.

CONSISTING OF

IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE ANECDOTES,

AND

A CURIOUS LETTER FROM A MEDICAL GENTLEMAN,

Now publiſhed, for the firſt time, from the Doctor's Manuſcripts, with ſome original and intereſting Stories of A PRIVATE NATURE, relative to that *great man.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

Several ſingular and unaccountable Facts relative to his BIOGRAPHICAL EXECUTOR, formerly Chairman of the Quarter-Seſſions.

By FRANCIS, BARBER.

LONDON:

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M,DCC,LXXXVII.

PREFACE.

THE following leaves, I may venture to conjecture, will afford the greateſt rational entertainment to all lovers of literary anecdote. They abound with paſſages of the moſt refined delicacy and elevated morality; paſſages which will animate the wavering Chriſtian to the practice of all that is noble, and confirm the philoſopher in the principles of his duty. I confeſs I cannot but feel ſome portion of vanity when I conſider that for me was reſerved the important taſk of diſcloſing to the public eye ſo brilliant a treaſure. It is neceſſary to obſerve that I am not the late Dr. Johnſon's black, but

but his white, ſervant. My name is Francis, and I had the honour of dreſſing his wig, and being admitted into his confidence. It is not vanity, but gratitude, which ſtimulates me to the performance of the preſent literary taſk. I would wiſh to endear the memory of my late maſter and friend to the world ſtill more, if poſſible, than the tender Piozzi has done, or the liberal and erudite Sir John Hawkins. If I ſucceed I do juſtice to his name, and immortalize my own; if I fail, I only ſuffer what others have endured before me. A great man's death, perhaps, never till now inſpired a biographical barber; but many inſtances have lately occurred to prove that it can call forth a barbarous biographer. May the information contained in the ſubſequent

quent pages exclude me from ever meriting that appellation!

Were I apprehenſive that my name's being ſuffered to ſtand in the title page of the preſent production could, in any degree, injure the ſale of the invaluable work which is ſoon expected from that learned gentleman, Francis Barber, the words ſhould have been omitted. I am conſcious that I have foreſtalled many anecdotes which he otherwiſe would have made known: ſo many, indeed, that, from the moment of this pamphlet's publication, he will be ſo incenſed as to look black in the face ever afterwards. But this will be the anger of pride rather than reaſon; for, be his materials ever ſo ſcanty, whatever proceeds

ceeds from ſuch an hand cannot but force itſelf into public notice by its intrinſic merit; and, indeed, our names are not ſo ſimilar as to delude the public into the idea that Mr. Francis, the barber, is Mr. Francis Barber, and thus impoſe the production of the former perſon upon them for that of the latter: or were this the caſe, the injurious effects of the preſent publication would be ſpeedily counteracted by Mr. Francis Barber's diſtinguiſhing his own work by ſigning it with his mark.

MORE

MORE LAST WORDS, &c.

PART I.

ANECDOTES OF DR. JOHNSON.

NOTHING is more gratifying to curioſity than anecdotes of great men. Hence the avidity with which the Johnſoniana of Meſſrs. Boſwell and Piozzi have been peruſed; an avidity which was almoſt equal to the importance of the productions. It was, no doubt, an extremely ſatisfactory piece of intelligence that the Doctor learned to box of his uncle Andrew; nor can the public ſufficiently recompenſe that man who firſt

informed them that the great Lexiphanes ſlept without a nightcap. The following anecdotes, which, ſome few excepted, are original, are equally important, and appear to me ſo valuable that I have dedicated the *firſt* part of this publication to their inſertion; as I have the *ſecond* to a very curious letter ſent me by a medical gentleman who was in the habits of intimacy with the hero of theſe anecdotes; and who, perceiving that I was honoured with the Doctor's friendſhip, thought proper to cultivate my acquaintance; and has, by his kind offices, conciliated my reſpect and eſteem.

Dr. Johnſon was certainly the greateſt man of his time, Mr. Bright, the Eſſex butcher,

butcher, excepted. But he was not more great than virtuous; for, though his whole talk was inſult and traduction, it does not appear that he ever robbed a church, or, like his friend Baretti, was tried for his life. So far indeed from wiſhing to rob a church, he could not withhold his bittereſt indignation if any man was profane enough to exert his diuretic faculty againſt a church-wall.

This excellent man was not contented with preaching the dictates of philoſophy —he practiſed them; as the following anecdotes will prove.

One day when I obſerved to him that his wig was ſo far burnt, by too cloſe a

contact with the candle during his midnight vigils, as not to be worn with decency, he ſeemed going to fly into a paſſion; but, checking himſelf, he ſaid, with great calmneſs, " then I muſt have another."

He ſhewed equal philoſophical indifference one evening at the late Mr. Strahan's, where a large party had aſſembled to enjoy the pleaſures of his inſtructive converſation, when letting a cup of tea fall upon his uncle, while abſtracted in meditation, and being interrogated by the lady of the houſe whether he was hurt, he replied, " Not at all, Madam, not at all;" ſo punctually did his actions accord with his profeſſions—ſo well did he practiſe

tiſe the philoſophical leſſons of THE RAMBLER.

For turning a compliment with elegance no man perhaps could equal Dr. Johnſon, of which his behaviour at Mr. ——'s table is an inſtance. Mr. ——'s lady having declared, with regret, that her dinner was ſcanty and ill-dreſſed, which, by the bye, was both elegant and expenſive, the Doctor replied, "*You lie, Madam,*" and fell to very heartily.

Of his extemporaneous productions, this is one—Seeing the quondam Mrs. Thrale point to the tankard one day at dinner, he exclaimed,

"Mrs.

" Mrs. Thrale
" Wants ſome ale."

This, it is true, was a mere levity; but it ſerves to ſhew the power of his genius, which was able inſtantaneouſly to dictate a ſtanza upon ſo trifling an occaſion. However, after a momentary pauſe, he recited theſe lines upon the ſame ſubject, which the reader, I believe, will acknowledge to poſſeſs elegance and pathos:

" In this bright pot the brewer's nectar glows,
" And paints his face as ruddy as the roſe;
" Yet would the ſweets of ſocial converſe fail
" Were this bright pot devoid of cheering ale.
" Unjoyous then its brightneſs all would view,
" Since thoſe who ſaw it would deteſt it too.
" Thus, dull and irkſome, thinking man ſhall find
" The loveliеſt Perſon unadorn'd with Mind."

Of his opinions, concerning the merits of

of literary productions, I recollect very few. The life of Jack Hickathrift he held in veneration, as affording an uſeful moral to mankind. "Sir," he would ſay, "you tell me that a boy like Jack cannot beat a giant; but you do not know what you ſay. Perſeverance will do all things. I gained my literary reputation by perſeverance."

Of the hiſtory of Tom Thumb, he thought that it was fabulous. "It may be true, or it may be not," ſaid he one day to Mr. Steevens, who hinted his intention of publiſhing the work with notes. "If you aſſert that it is true, I call for a proof of its authenticity; yet I believe you will not find one in the Britiſh hiſtory,

tory, nor even in the Britiſh Muſeum." But let it not from hence be inferred that Dr. Johnſon entertained a contemptuous opinion of Mr. Steevens's talents. He certainly held them in proper eſtimation, and has often ſeriouſly told me that he believed no author more capable than Mr. Steevens of writing a commentary on Tom Thumb.

Dr. Johnſon was always hurt if a man of abilities degraded the dignity of his fellow-creatures, by contemptuous repreſentations of human nature; and for this reaſon Lord Monboddo was his conſtant averſion. "That man," he uſed to ſay, "is a walking paradox. He would make us

ns out of conceit with ourſelves for reaſons the moſt abſurd. I ſhall expect, in his next volume of Ancient Metaphyſicks, that he will not be ſatisfied with prefering, like Roſſeau, a ſtate of nature to a ſtate of civilization; but that, like Swift, he will impiouſly ridicule the very make and ſtructure of the human ſpecies: that he will, with the folly, though not the wit, of Momus, wiſh that man had a window in his breaſt, in order that his ſecret councils might be diſcovered: that he will queſtion the goodneſs of Providence in giving us two feet inſtead of four; and declare that our heads are nothing but excreſcences from our bodies, and ſerve no other purpoſe but to hang our hats upon."

Mr. Boſwell has related, in his journey to the Hebrides, that he cannot hear a bagpipe played upon, without feeling emotions of enthuſiaſm which it is impoſſible to deſcribe. This circumſtance he once, unluckily, told Mrs. Piozzi, then Mrs. Thrale, who, mentioning it in converſation with the Doctor, made it a ſubject of ridicule, miſchievouſly talked of having the martial ſounds of that inſtrument conveyed to his ears in an unexpected moment, and begged to know what would be the nature of their effects. Incenſed at her want of feeling, and her intention of ſporting with the misfortunes of his friend, the Doctor replied, " Why, Madam, Bozzy would do that, upon hearing a bagpipe, which you often

often do without hearing one—he would p-ſs himſelf. Read Shylock's ſpeech on the power of ſympathy, Madam, and you will ſee the matter explained in terms more elegant but not more veracious."

Dr. Johnſon had an ingenuous frankneſs about him, when ſpeaking even of his deareſt friends, that was ſingularly pleaſing. Thus, one day, he was haranguing a company, at Garrick's houſe, on the neceſſity of corporal puniſhments being inflicted at ſchools, and concluded his diſcourſe by pointing to his *quondam* ſcholar, and ſaying, "Why, there is David now, for an example! He is by nature ſuch a blockhead, that I was forced to flog every letter of the alphabet into him."

No perſon was ever a geater admirer of this celebrated man than Mrs. Macauley, the hiſtorian, who, though of different political principles, was not, as Dr. Johnſon declared, totally deſpicable. This lady was once crowned with laurel on her birth-day, (of which ceremony Sir John Hawkins copiouſly relates the particulars in his late publication,) and ſhe returned the compliment by begging leave to kiſs the Doctor's hand. "Madam," ſaid the Doctor, "you are at liberty to kiſs my *hand*, as a *woman*; but as a *whig*, you ought to think it an honour to be permitted to kiſs my ——."

Upon the publication of his Tour to the Hebrides, the editor of Oſſian was ſo irritated at the freedom with which the

the authenticity of his collection of that ſublime poet's productions had been diſcuſſed, that he ſent Dr. Johnſon a ſhort note, intimating his intention of caning him if he proceeded any farther in his inquiries upon that ſubject. Dr. Johnſon wrote an anſwer, equally laconic, in the following words:

"SIR,

THE threats of a ruffian ſhall not prevent me from detecting the deceptions ofan impoſtor.

SAM. JOHNSON."

Dr. Johnſon's talents for religious controverſy cannot be doubted; but a proof of the ſtrength of argument by which he

he could enforce his opinion, may not be unacceptable. Diſcourſing in company one day on the ſubject of the Trinity as delivered in the Athanaſian creed, ſome doubts were ſtarted by ſeveral perſons preſent, which were not the moſt favourable to a doctrine ſo obvious and rational. Dr. Johnſon declaimed againſt ſuch profaneneſs. This ſcepticiſm, however, was attempted to be ſupported by reaſons, of which the Doctor proved the fallacy by riſing up, clenching his fiſt, and declaring that "if any perſon dared offer a doubt upon the ſubject, he *would knock him down.*" This was dealing in arguments of the moſt *forcible* nature, which could not but apply themſelves to the *ſenſes*, and which would, no doubt, have

have been more efficacious in controverting the opinions of Soame Jenyngs than all the reaſoning and ridicule ſo happily beſtowed in the *Remarks on the Origin of Evil*.—This anecdote I had of Dr. H—pſ—n, who had it of Dr. Kenrick, who was preſent at the time of its occurrence.

Dr. Johnſon's tenderneſs to the fair ſex is well known; but in no inſtance is it more conſpicuous than the following: At Burton upon Trent, while he was conſidered merely as a young man of ingenuity, he viſited Mr. ———, an apothecary, who had the good fortune of being in poſſeſſion of an amiable and lovely daughter. The Doctor and ſhe were

were often engaged in literary and inſtructive converſations; but at one time ſhe happened to differ from him in ſome point or other, and unluckily offered ſeveral arguments ſo powerful as to render it almoſt impoſſible for her not to be victorious in the diſpute. The Doctor, however, with that delicacy which was ſo congenial to his diſpoſition, and that addreſs which marks only a man of ſuperior genius, ſeized her arm, and, griping it with great force, occaſioned a violent ſcream, and a flood of tears, from the lady. Her father, alarmed at the noiſe, ran down ſtairs, learnt from her the ſtory, and remonſtrated with the Doctor, who, with the greateſt good-nature, rolled his head about, and laughed

heartily

heartily at this inſtance of female weakneſs and folly.

One evening Mr. Boſwell was talking of the fame and antiquity of his family, when Dr. Johnſon appeared to liſten with great gravity. Flattered by ſuch a mark of attention, he declared that his anceſtors had been the greateſt warriors in all Scotland. Upon this, the Doctor placed his hands upon the arms of his chair, and, riſing about three inches from his ſeat, fulminated a loud crepitation from behind. The riſibility of the whole company was excited, when Boſwell exclaimed, "Your voice, Sir, is celeſtial, and you ſmell like an angel;" to which

the great Lexiphanes replied by repeating, from Midas,

" When he ſpeaks,
" Thunder breaks;"

and burſt into an hearty fit of laughter.

MORE LAST WORDS, &c.

PART II.

I HAVE divided this publication into two parts, that the reader may be enabled, at a proper moment, to pauſe and recollect what he has read; as, by revolving it in his mind, he will impreſs on his memory that which ought never to be forgotten. All the anecdotes with which I was myſelf acquainted, I have inſerted in the firſt part; the ſecond I ſhall dedicate to the letter of a medical gentleman who was in the habits of intimacy with Dr. Johnſon; and who, the

reader will obſerve, was not his friend without acquiring that knowledge which may always be reaped from the acquaintance of men of abilities.

To ——— FRANCIS, Eſq.

HONOURED SIR,

AS I hear that you are about to publiſh a collection of Johnſoniana, the preſent letter, I truſt, will not be unwelcome, as it is written for the purpoſe of imparting ſeveral valuable particulars reſpecting that great literary character; particulars which you are at liberty to make public, either collectively or in part, as your own good ſenſe and judgment ſhall ſuggeſt.

You

You well know the laudable attention I have ever paid to medicine. I have ſuffered no part of nature to eſcape me, however low, which could improve my ſtock of knowledge. For this reaſon, while I have been buſied in the ſublimeſt phyſical reſearches, I have not thought it beneath me to inſpect the water-cloſets of the learned. Such a cuſtom may be ridiculed by the ſuperficial, but the ſenſible and erudite will applaud that curioſity which looks into the *bottom* of things, and which muſt of courſe be *fundamentally* learned. The multitude, who judge without reflection, may deſpiſe me. It is to the *few* I write, who approve things pleaſing leſs than *neceſſary* things.

By

By ſuch a practice, I have often acquired a knowledge of valuable literary anecdotes; and doubt not that Sir John Hawkins gathered the important materials of his lately-publiſhed biography from the ſame ſtore. This I judge from the nature of his book, which, I have heard many perſons ſay, *ſmells rank* of malignity; (by uſing ſuch a word as malignity they only indulge their envy); and which I have myſelf obſerved to diſplay great *depth* of reſearch. To what elſe can ſeveral people have alluded, when, upon reading his attacks on Richardſon, Sterne, Fielding, &c. &c. they exclaimed that he was *a dirty fellow*; and that to attract the public attention by ſuch means was pitiful and *naſty?* My opinion

opinion is, indeed, confirmed by recollecting that I have ſeen the prediction of ſome philoſophers verified, viz. *that all things which now owe their ſhape to mixture and alteration ſhall return to their firſt ſtate*; for, in the houſes-of-office of my friends and acquaintance, I generally ſee ſeveral leaves of Sir John's book depoſited on the ſhelves as offerings to Cloacina; and have been repeatedly obliged to commit ſuch knowledge to the place from whence, as I conjecture, it originally came.

In making the above remarks, it is by no means my intention to derogate from the acknowledged merit of that great biographer.

biographer. I have myſelf learned much by theſe examinations; and, by the practice of a variety of experiments, and an habit of deep reflection, have at laſt diſcovered, by the ſize and formation, what excrements have fallen from learned men; and, by the taſte and colour, in what ſpecies of learning thoſe men excelled. Thus profound and erudite authors generally emit long and ſturdy ones, ſomewhat in the ſhape of ninepins; and theſe are either perfect or broken as their compoſitions are regular or unequal, and rugged or ſmooth according to the aſperity or courtlineſs of their ſtyle. Johnſon's, which was large, but to appearance evacuated with great

labour,

labour, was ſurrounded with protuberances, like a cucumber or a pomegranate; ſo was Swift's. Pope's was extremely uniform and elegant in its ſtructure, with ſome appearance, indeed, of internal roughneſs; but Shenſtone's was as poliſhed, as delicate, and as mournful, as a roll of the moſt elegant black ſealing-wax.

Speaking of Shenſtone reminds me of an anecdote which neither Dodſley nor Johnſon have mentioned in his life, but with which I became acquainted from my cuſtom of inſpecting all that appertains to an houſe-of-office: an houſe which has afforded me the greateſt li-

terary knowledge; not more from diving with no unhallowed hands into its ſacred merdicular abyſs, than from peruſing the various inſcriptions on its walls and windows.

Spence was often with Shenſtone at the Leaſowes, where they repeatedly ſaw Baſkerville, the famous printer; a gentleman with whom for many years they had been united in the bonds of friendſhip. One time, when they had dined at Baſkerville's, neceſſity drove them into his Chapel of Eaſe, againſt the wall of which, for the ſake of exciting ſome innocent mirth, they wrote the following:

Whoever

Whoever ſays he knows a letter
As good as Baſkerville's, or better,
Is fit for nought but to catch roaches*,
Or greaſe the axletrees of coaches.

JOE. SPENCE,
WILL. SHENSTONE.

Baſkerville, contrary to expectation, as well as intention, was irritated at the *jeu d' eſprit*, and wrote under it theſe lines:

Vain wretch, that doth profane the name of Spence,
Or Shenſtone too, with ſuch lame, far-fetch'd ſenſe,
Whoſe tuneful lays, whoſe ſoft melodious ſong,
"Like purling waters, gently glide along;"
Can he—with ſtraining hard,—ſuch lines heave out,
To prove, by argument, a roach no trout?
Can he, in doggrel, good plain-taſte, reproach,
Forget the proverb too—ſound as a roach?

* This alludes to Mr. Baſkerville's paſſion for catching this fiſh.

No, 'tis not he! the forg'ry plain appears,
The lion's ſkin can't hide the aſſe's ears:
Friend frizzle, then, when next thou com'ſt to ſh——,
Go on with that, thy talent's not to write.

J. Baskerville.

Baſkerville would not for a conſiderable time after this deign to ſpeak to, or viſit, either Spence or Shenſtone; and many ſatires were written in reſentment, by theſe poets, on "the printing fiſherman." Thus was a friendſhip, which had ſubſiſted ſo long, deſtroyed by writing in an houſe of office; and this anecdote may prove the importance of my inquiries. Thoſe who doubt my veracity, may be cleared from their ſuſpicions by calling at the houſe of Mr. Baſkerville's widow,

in

in Birmingham, where they may ſee the original lines, which I have here quoted, and learn the particulars of the ſtory, as I have here related them, from Mrs. Baſkerville herſelf.

Since I am on the ſubject of illuſtrating the private characters of eminent perſonages, it may prove no unimportant taſk to relate an intereſting particular reſpecting the late Mrs. Baddely. This lady being afflicted with a diſorder which I have not the indelicacy to mention, (yet, leſt the ſuppreſſion of its name ſhould lead you to entertain ſuſpicions injurious to her character, I confeſs, with bluſhes, that it was *coſtiveneſs*), was obliged to have recourſe to Dr. Glo-

ver,

ver, a medical gentleman, well remembered in the convivial world. He preſcribed her a cathartic potion, and called ſoon afterwards to learn whether her diſorder ſtill continued? "No, Sir," replied this amiable actreſs, pointing to a certain utenſil, vulgarly called the cloſe-ſtool, but more delicately denominated, by an epicure of my acquaintance, the *pudding-pan*;—"No Sir," ſaid this amiable actreſs, "for, if you will look in *there*, you will ſee that I have *done* it almoſt full." The Doctor ſtared at the innocent ingenuouſneſs with which ſhe anſwered his queſtion. Conſtruing this into the aſtoniſhment of incredulity, ſhe addreſſed herſelf, with a voice of earneſtneſs, to Webſter, who then kept her, with "M

dear,

dear, is it not true? Did not I do it almoſt full?" Oh, yes," replied Webſter, "quite full, I ſaw it run over."

The anecdote I had from Dr. Glover himſelf; and my ſole end in thus relating it, is to convince you how much knowledge of this nature I have accumulated, at the ſame time that I ſtrengthen your intellects, improve your morals, and render your heart ſuſceptible of every elegant impreſſion. This anecdote, it is true, has not been inſerted in Mrs. Steele's Memoirs of her deceaſed friend, and therefore I fear that your giving it publication may lead the world to imagine that I would prejudice them againſt that inſtructive work, by acquainting them

them with what its fair author has omitted, and thus implying that it is imperfect. But I diſclaim ſo malignant an intention. Too great is my eſtimation of the chaſte and amiable virtues of her character, for me to think of giving her delicate mind a moment's uneaſineſs; and too great my reverence for her brilliant literary talents for me to attempt to blaſt the laurels that are twined around her temples by Diana and Apollo.

But I find that I am imperceptibly loſing ſight of my great object. My original intention in writing this epiſtle was to have given you an account of ſome important particulars relative to Dr. Johnſon, and of ſome valuable writ-

ings

ings diſcovered in his temple of Cloacina after his death, and I have imperceptibly glided into ſubjects which are by no means analogous. It is almoſt impoſſible to read the works of any great writer, without infuſing much of his manner into our own ſtyle; and the attention which I have paid to the biographical lucubrations of Sir John Hawkins, has infected me with a habit of digreſſion. This peculiarity, however, is by no means to be imitated; ſince, though it be converted by him into a beauty, it becomes a blemiſh in the hands of an inferior writer. Let me therefore return to my original ſubject.

After Dr. Johnſon had paid the water-cloſets and chapels of eaſe a viſit, it was my cuſtom to inſpect them, for the purpoſe of collecting ſuch manuſcripts as the indolence of his genius might be *backwards* in diſplaying; and I have thus attained to a greater knowledge of his abilities and character, than all that Sir John himſelf has ever told the public. I have met with innumerable papers, valuable for their merit, which I ſhall ſoon publiſh, and which will prove the great regard the Doctor entertained for his learned friends Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Boſwell, and Mrs. Piozzi. I have, likewiſe, by accurately inveſtigating the nature and properties of the digeſted food

there

there depoſited by the Doctor, acquired no ſmall degree of additional ſkill in my profeſſion; for it has enabled me to diſcover that pills made out of the excrements of a man of genius, are of great efficacy towards diſpelling the fumes of indigeſtion or melancholy, rendering the imagination brilliant, and clarifying the conceptions of the mind. To account for this effect is an eaſy matter: the ſpirits, which are of a more than uſually refined nature in a man of genius, pervade his corporeal ſubſtance, and, entering all parts of his body, impregnate his dung with their exquiſite quality. The dung given to another perſon, either as a bolus, an unction, or a pill, cauſes him to imbibe the genius into his own frame by

abſorption; and, for this reaſon, I have often, when my literary patients have complained of dulneſs or languor, preſcribed to them three pills to be ſwallowed of a morning faſting; or if they diſliked the ſubſtance in this form, to take the peruke from their head and rub their ſcull with a piece of it about the ſize of a walnut. This laſt method may perhaps be the moſt proper, ſince it is not only more pleaſing to thoſe who diſlike all that bears the appearance of phyſic, but more likely to penetrate into, and impregnate with its ſpirit, thoſe parts which are chiefly requiſite to operate in works of genius—the brain, and all the region of the ſenſes.

I was

I was encouraged to proceed in theſe merdico-medical inquiries by Dr. Johnſon himſelf, who, one day, at dinner, declared before a large company, whoſe converſation happened to turn upon poſthumous works, that, by ſuch means, many pleaſing compoſitions might be obtained. I then modeſtly confeſſed to him that I had, for a long time paſt, clandeſtinely made it a practice to cultivate ſuch examinations, but that I had hitherto been aſhamed to let him know the circumſtance, leſt he ſhould treat me with deriſion: to which he replied "Not at all, Sir; ſome diſtinction I ſhall ever make between neceſſary and wanton naſtineſs; between naſtineſs that has no other end than to gratify folly, or diſguſt elegance,

and

that which is ſubmitted to as the means either of producing future cleanlineſs, or of promoting uſeful knowledge. Swift would treat your reſearches as ridiculous. He would ironically compliment you on exploring *the ſecrets of the hoary deep*. But Swift, it muſt be remembered, was a filthy fellow." So ſaying, this great man broke wind backwards three ſeveral times with great force and energy; upon which, I could obſerve, ſeveral ladies gave the ſervants thoſe plates that they had not half emptied, and ceaſed regaling themſelves with the luxuries of that dinner, which they had ſcarcely began. Such was the attention Dr. Johnſon's converſation could inſpire, that corporeal wants were neglected to be ſatiſfied,

fied, while he had an opportunity of affording a more noble repaſt for the mind.

Yet it is certain, that though Dr. Johnſon encouraged me to proſecute theſe inquiries, he was not pleaſed when I informed him that they had been chiefly carried on in *his* water-cloſet: for this reaſon I was particularly cautious of concealing from his knowledge that I had thence extracted ſeveral writings of his own compoſition, that he had never given to the public. It makes me ſmile to think with what ſecrecy he frequented that place of unavoidable reſort, in order to prevent me from entering it after his departure. Yet notwithſtanding

ſtanding all this, notwithſtanding he ſometimes uſed brown paper, and burned that on which he had himſelf written, I ſtill obtained ſeveral productions that he had before, and, through forgetfulneſs, afterwards, uſed. Sometimes indeed, when I took great pains to diſcover theſe literary treaſures, I was diſappointed, but in no inſtance more than the following:

One morning we were taking a walk a few miles from London, when the Doctor bade me retire at ſome diſtance. I did ſo, yet was not far enough off but that I could diſcern his actions; and, in order to ſee better what he was doing, I drew from my pocket my teleſcope.

teleſcope. With the aſſiſtance of this inſtrument I plainly obſerved the Doctor unbutton his breeches, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, ſtand in a fitting poſture behind the hedge, for the laudable purpoſe of eaſing nature. I obſerved there was a great mole on the right cheek of his poſteriors, which were very large; a circumſtance that Mrs. Piozzi, who ought to know the fact, has neglected to make public. The ſight was extremely ſublime, and inſpired me with emotions of awe and admiration, ſimilar to thoſe which I feel upon the peruſal of Milton's *Il Penſeroſo*, or the *Inferno* of *Dante*. The e-------ts he diſcharged were ſuitable to the deſcription I have given on a former

occaſion ; — in appearance not unlike a Bologna ſauſage, with ſome degree of aſperity on the ſurface. He wiped himſelf with a large piece of paper, buttoned his breeches, directed his courſe towards me, and I accompanied him home.

The moment I parted with him, I haſtened to the place where he had left his offerings to Cloacina, that I might ſee whether the paper, with which he had mundified his poſteriors, was a manuſcript. My wiſh was gratified ; it *was* a manuſcript, and of his own writing. I hurried it into my pocket, and having to dine with Mr. Boſwell that afternoon, walked inſtantly to his houſe,

boaſted

boaſted of my good fortune, and, to prove my great regard for that gentleman, begged his acceptance of ſo ineſtimable an acquiſition. Mr. Boſwell thanked me in terms of the greateſt politeneſs, for what he was pleaſed to call my unexampled generoſity, and endeavoured to make out the words. Finding his attempts vain, he conceived that if the paper were dried, he ſhould be able to ſcrape off the yellow pellicle, and decypher the whole. For this purpoſe, he ordered it to be hung before the kitchen fire; but unfortunately the cook, ignorant of its value, ſkewered it round a joint of meat that was then roaſting. Much company had been invited to dinner, and this literary *morceau* became the ſubject of

Mr. Boſwell's converſation, who, conjecturing that the paper muſt by now have been perfectly dried, ſent up for it. It could not be found, and the cook was charged with having either deſtroyed it, or uſed it for ſome purpoſe or other. This ſhe perſiſted to deny, and would have paſſed undetected in her criminal neglect, had not the truth been providentially diſcovered by a young lady's being ſeen to lay ſomething like ſkin on the ſide of her plate, that ſhe had attempted to chew in vain, that, on examination, proved by ſeveral legible words to be the very paper from which ſo much entertainment had been expected, and which the cook, through careleſſneſs, had ſent up in part to table.

Such

Such is the folly of the wicked, that, at the very moment they act basely, they commit some neglect or other which furnishes means for the discovery of their crime!

The colour of the paper likewise proved it's authenticity. The taste Miss —— observed was rather strong in her mouth; but the cook persisted in saying that both the taste and colour arose from the gravy of the meat. This might indeed be said of the *colour*; but we *tasted* it all round, and it felt to the palate much more bitter than gravy. Mr. Boswell was enraged, dismissed his cook at a moment's warning, and scarcely spoke a word during the remainder of the

the day. The company likewiſe were not in good ſpirits at their diſappointment. Thus was a day's pleaſure deſtroyed by the ignorance of a cook, whoſe folly deprived us of that pure gratification which we ſhould have received from the peruſal of what had perhaps never yet been printed, and what from the Doctor's poſteriors might have been handed down to his poſterity!

Yet to convince you that I have not always been thus diſappointed, I ſhall conclude my letter by laying before you one or two ſpecimens of the literary acquiſitions I have obtained in the courſe of my examinations into Dr. Johnſon's little receſs. It were a vain taſk to talk

of

of letting you have all, or even the twentieth part of theſe acquiſitions, becauſe the number is ſo great that I think proper to print them as a work by itſelf, and upon the appearance of the thirtieth edition of your valuable pamphlet, I ſhall deliver them inſtantly to the preſs for the purpoſe of gratifying the expectations and the wiſhes of the world by a publication of them in ſix folio volumes.

SPECIMENS

SPECIMENS

Of the Literary Treaſures extracted from Dr. Johnſon's Water-cloſet.

MATERIALS FOR MY OWN LIFE.

" HOW I, Sir John Hawkins, knight and juſtice of the peace, write my life, in order to prevent the miſtakes of thoſe who may, upon my deceaſe, become my biographers. This life will chiefly conſiſt of the fulleſt account yet made public of my literary cotemporaries.

" How my mother, ſome little time before my birth, dreamed that ſhe was brought to bed of an owl. How my father laughed at her the next morning.

How

How her dream was repeated, with this addition—that the owl pecked at a dead eagle, and would have devoured it, had it not been frightened away by ſome unlucky ſchoolboys pelting it with ſtones, bricks, wood, and divers other things. How ſhe was extremely troubled thereat.

" How, on the third night, ſhe again dreamed that ſhe was brought to bed of an owl that played upon the fiddle. How ſhe conſulted a cunning woman on the occaſion, who predicted my future literary and muſical greatneſs.

" How her great joy, in conſequence thereof, accelerated my birth. How the nurſes rejoiced. How my nativity was

caſt, and Saturn found to be in the aſcendant. How it was therefrom predicted that I ſhould be a man of great gravity and importance. How my father was enraged at hearing the affair, and frightened the nurſe, who let me fall with my head againſt the hearth. How the hearth was broken, but my head unhurt. How a doctor was ſent for, and I cried at the ſight, and preſently dropped into a doze.

" Of the pranks of my childhood, after I could walk, particularly in making a ſet of ſtate trials, and ſeveral other valuable books in my father's library, imperfect, by tearing the leaves out for a purpoſe which ſhall be nameleſs; how this practice

practice was diſcovered, and how my father tired both his arms, and wore out a large rod, in chaſtiſing the offending parts; and how he cried becauſe he could not make me ſhed a tear, or diſcover any ſigns of contrition.

" How I was very miſchievous and malicious, but never laughed; and how I was obliged to be ſent to ſchool.

" Of my ſchool ingenuity, how I uſed to tell tales of my ſchoolfellows to the uſher and maſter, and how I uſed to complain to my ſchoolfellows of the tyranny of their governors. How I was very fond of pudding; and uſed to doze whilſt I was ſaying my leſſon.

" How our maſter, in order to im-

prove us in the arts of eloquence and compoſition, uſed to give us a theme to harangue upon, before an aſſembly of the whole ſchool. How My ſpeech conſiſted of perſonal abuſe againſt my ſchool-fellows. How I cenſured one of them who had often aſſiſted me in doing my exerciſe for his ſtupidity and injuſtice; and how he contradicted the truth of my aſſertion, by getting out of his place and beating me well. How I cried out, but neither the maſter nor the uſhers could hear me, as they had dropped to ſleep.

" How I was ſoon taken from ſchool; how I became painful to my parents, from what they ridiculouſly termed my inſolence; and how I was ſent away from their houſe, and their lands, te-

nants,

nants, goods, and chattels thereunto appertaining, and bound clerk to an attorney.

" How I ſaw an attorney take a cauſe in hand, *gratis*, of a man who had been infinitely injured, but could not afford to pay the proper fees, though his family would be ruined if the cauſe were not brought forward. How I deſpiſed the attorney for his idiotiſm in affairs of the world.

" How I read Addiſon's Spectator, and was much offended at his drawing ſuch characters as Sir Roger de Coverley, Capt. Sentry, and Will Honeycomb. How it appeared evident that he had an intention to ſap the foundations of morality thereby.

by. How a lady aſked me what I had read? and how I told her. How ſhe aſked me if I was not pleaſed with Sir Roger? and how I was ſhocked at her indecency.

" How I was unwilling to conceal my talents from the world, and engaged to write eſſays in an evening paper. How I was ſoon turned off, and how I obſerved that the paper grew extremely dull directly after.

" How Fielding, Richardſon, Goldſmith, and Dr. Hawkeſworth, peſtered the town with novels, eaſtern romances, and ſuch nonſenſe. How I therefore thought that they all had entered into a

deſign

deſign to deſtroy the innocence and happineſs of mankind by their writings, and how I became certain of this, from hearing that they had ſeveral times dined together.

" How I took much to reading Pope, Swift, and Addiſon; how I found my mind grow tumid thereby, and feared I ſhould be obliged, like Doctor Johnſon, to write ſuch papers as the Ramblers. How I was much vexed thereat, and applied myſelf to Blackmore, Pomfret, Sternhold and Hopkins, and Tate and Brady, and how I was much edified thereby.

" Of my great knowledge of muſic; of

of my judgment in the ſcience being exemplified by my deciſions on ſeveral riſing performers, both vocal and inſtrumental, particularly in holding the abilities of Harriſon in contempt. Of my muſical publication, and how ſucceſsfully I diſpoſed of my work, by aſking my friends if they had ſeen it; and, when they replied in the negative, promiſing to ſend them a ſet. How they thanked me thereupon; and how, ſoon after having ſent them one, I called upon them for the money.

" Of my acquaintance with Dr. Johnſon, and my *miſtakes* in thoughtleſſly taking away his cane, and one of his manuſcripts. How it was odd enough that I ſhould

I ſhould by miſtake lay my hand upon that cane only which had a gold head, and that MS. which was conſidered to contain much valuable information; with a few remarks on the propenſity of great men to be forgetful, and commit errors through careleſſneſs, which thoſe who do not know their weakneſs might naturally attribute to premeditated deſign.

"How I have forgot to mention my being made a juſtice of peace. How I ſaw Midas one night at the theatre, and was incenſed to obſerve ſuch an inſult offered to the dignity of juſtices of the peace, by making Midas one, and, at the ſame time, painting him a ridiculous character.

" How I meditated on Midas when I came home, and was terrified, leſt, as ſome of the characters in the piece are heathen gods and goddeſſes, it ſhould corrupt the religion of the country, and infect the audience with polytheiſm.

" How I went the next night to ſee Venice Preſerved, and was much offended thereat. Pierro, who is one of the characters, forms a plot to ruin all the juſtices of the peace in Venice. This is, as I have ſomewhere read, *ſudere cum lacris.* I was pleaſed, however, to ſee poetical juſtice done at laſt; for a Mr. Jaffier lodged an information againſt him, and a mittimus was inſtantly made out for Pierro.

" How

" How I ſaw the Conſcious Lovers of Steele performed on one of the hot-beds of vice, and was diſguſted with the dull and inſipid ſtuff of Bevil, Myrtle, and Indiana; and how a pantomime ſucceeded, by which I was much entertained.

" How I ſlept upon my back, and dreamed of Harlequin cutting the taylor's head off, and woke in a fright.

" How I read Swift's propoſal to the people of Ireland for lightening their diſtreſs and poverty, by eating the poor children of the kingdom; how I was ſhocked at the barbarity of the idea.

" How I read his Advice to Servants, and was aſtoniſhed that he ſhould ſe-

rioufly

riouſly think it their duty to act as he counſels them.

" How I caught cold one day by walking over Black Friars Bridge, and how I took care of myſelf thereupon, and got well again.

" How I behaved with ſuch conſcious dignity, or, as ignorant people called it, inſolence, to every body, when I was CHAIRMAN OF THE QUARTER SESSIONS, that they joined unanimouſly in procuring my diſmiſſion.

" How I gave a feeble old beggar an halfpenny one afternoon, and how he bought a glaſs of gin therewith. How I was ſo incenſed at his impudence and wickedneſs as to knock the gin out of his

his trembling hand, and prevent his getting any more money, by ſtanding by him till duſk; and how going home the thoughts of the beggar's ſcandalous conduct ran ſo in my head, as to give riſe to a great many deep and ſenſible reflections on the unfeeling nature of mankind.

" How I had a pain in my bowels after *diſſipating* a whole night with an eminent female author; concerning the particulars of which ſee my biography of Dr. Johnſon; and how, like the ſwain of Gay, I was in doubt whether it was love or the bellyache. How I was obliged haſtily to retire into the back-yard, and thereby convinced that it was only the bellyache. How the anxiety of my mind was much eaſed thereat.

" How

" How * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *"

It was with great difficulty that I could diſcover, through the brown ſhade of the paper, the above words; but what follows is totally unintelligible. How ſo valuable a paper could become the inhabitant of the place from whence I obtained it, may afford much matter for curious ſpeculation. It could hardly have been depoſited there by Sir John Hawkins himſelf. By whoſe hand then could it have been committed as an offering to the goddeſs of the yellow-robe?

The following is obviouſly the production of Dr. Johnſon.

" Of the authors who have embittered the happineſs of life by the pernicious tendency of their writings, none are more atrocious than thoſe who have taught us to be diſcontented with our preſent condition, by unreaſonable murmurs at the diſpenſations of Providence, and partial deſcriptions of the ſufferings of mankind.

" How men could be found ſo weak and wicked as to teach us to repine at a ſituation which, however miſerable, we are ordained to ſuffer, is not eaſy to be conceived; but it is certain that writers have exiſted whoſe aim has been to pervert the end for which their abilities were given them, and diſſeminate corruption, when it was their duty to have promoted amendment; that, inſtead of improving

improving our knowledge, and elevating our virtue, they have dwelt with malignant pleaſure on the degradation of human nature; and that they have called in to their aſſiſtance all the radiance of wit and ſtrength of ratiocination in order to ſupport tenets which could be expected to proceed only from pertinacious ignorance or deſperate impiety.

" Thoſe who indulge themſelves in declamations on the turpitude of mankind, are not unuſeful members of ſociety; and the miſanthrope, though his repreſentations of human baſeneſs impreſs us with gloomy and dreadful ideas, is not deſtructive to the intereſts of virtue, becauſe the horror he excites originates from a deteſtation of moral depravity;

pravity; but the wretches who depreciate the ſtructure of the human frame, and ridicule the common offices required by nature, have no apology to offer: they rebel againſt conviction and rationality; cenſure what ought to inſpire them with admiration and reverence, and add ingratitude to folly.

What were their motives for ſuch nefarious conduct, is beneath the dignity of the preſent ſubject to inquire; but perhaps, notwithſtanding the contempt with which they affect to view human nature, they are not themſelves ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, either in conſtitution or temper, but ſubject to the ſame deſires and the ſame averſions; ſtimulated by

the ſame hope, alarmed by the ſame fear, diſtracted by paſſions, and diſtreſſed by neceſſities.

" Of all the ſubjects at which theſe men have levelled the ſhafts of jocular ſatire, none has grown more ſtale by frequent repetition, than an houſe of office; an houſe, which may ſurely claim ſome diſtinction, as it has ever been the reſort of the greateſt poets and rhetoricians, philoſophers, and divines. There they direct our attention, if we would learn humility, and affect to laugh at our ideas of human importance, by reminding us how ludicrous human importance appears when painfully relieving the neceſſities

neceſſities of nature. But it cannot eaſily be proved that there is any cauſe to bluſh for what is unavoidable, or to conſider that as a degradation which is univerſally required from mankind.

"Yet perhaps theſe intimations may not be wholly without advantage; for though they render the ignorant more obſtinate, and the diſcontented more ungrateful, they may ſerve as uſeful leſſons to the ſage, and teach him to check the vanity of human wiſhes.

"It is the advice of Claudian, to thoſe who would cure themſelves of an hopeleſs paſſion, to conceive the grimaces and

 contemptible

contemptible ſituation of their miſtreſs, when eaſing the neceſſities of nature; and perhaps were the ſlaves of vain hopes and ambitious deſires to take an imaginary view of his ſtate when ſeated in the houſe-of-office, he would elevate his hopes to nobler proſpects than the admiration of mortals, and be convinced of the deſpicable inanity of human pride. By ſuch a retroſpection, beauty might learn to deſpiſe the folly of her conqueſts: and ſome hopes might be entertained that tyranny, power, and riches, would be drawn back from their preſumptious ideas of ſuperior worth, to remember that they are not above the level of mankind; that they are obliged to perform

the vileſt offices, even of the brute creation; and that they cannot rationally expect a greater degree of dignity than the reſt of their fellow creatures, unleſs they practiſe a greater degree of virtue."

Such, Sir, are the ſpecimens of my literary treaſures! ſuch is the knowledge my reſearches into the grand cave of Cloacina have obtained!

In writing on ſo tender a ſubject, I congratulate myſelf on having uſed no expreſſion that can convey an indelicate idea. If I *had*, however, I truſt an apology is unneceſſary, for my ſole aim has been to inform and improve; and therefore

therefore you might ſay to me, what I heard judiciouſly ſaid to an amiable and faſhionable young lady of my acquaintance. Not conceiving that I was near her, as ſhe was in converſe with a female friend, on ſome moral or literary topic, ſhe happened to let fly a terrible rowzer; for which ſhe politely exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, madam!"—"Pray do not make an apology," replied the other, "there ought not to be any ceremony between us."

If you think proper to publiſh this letter, I requeſt that you will omit my name; for the importance of what I have communicated is ſo great, that

I am

I am certain it would cauſe much envy and create me many enemies.

I remain,

My dear Francis,

Your humble Servant,

* * * * * * *

I am certain it would excite much envy
and create me many enemies.

I remain,

My dear Francis,

Your humble Servant.

* * * * * * *